

# CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

OF  
POPULAR

LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART.

*Fourth Series*

CONDUCTED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS.

No. 353.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 1, 1870.

PRICE 1½d.

## ALFRED DELIGNE'S VINDICATION.

IN FOUR CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER I.

'MISS KATE is ill, Mr Deligne. The doctor doubts it is fever.' The servant-girl, as she spoke, stood aside in the doorway of the rather large mansion, for the young gentleman to enter, if he so chose.

'Fever!' he gasped. The servant, who already had the unusual air of grave self-importance which all at once dignifies the humblest member of a household which a contagious disease invades, looked at him keenly. Her answer had transformed him. In a single second, his blanched face was covered with perspiration; his eyes suddenly blazed with excitement, but he visibly shook from head to foot. He made no movement to enter the house, nor did he speak further. Turning about, he clutched at the side palisades, and went unsteadily down the front steps into the crescent. His staggering hurry increased at each stride; he, as it were, struggled through the groups he met on the pavement, like one in positive flight.

'He is either very much afraid for Miss Kate, or else for himself,' drily muttered the servant, with just a doubtful curl of the lip, as she gently put to the door, shutting herself within the infected house.

Alfred Deligne, who thus equivocally hurried away from Mrs Kesteven's residence on learning that there might be danger in entering it, was a young gentleman of about twenty-two years of age. He was slightly built, and, at any time, had a somewhat delicate look, though it was partly obscured by an unusual brownness of complexion. This he had brought with him from foreign parts, for, although he was an unquestionable Englishman by descent, he had been both born and brought up in China. His father was a commercial agent in one of the 'Treaty Ports' there; and, as Alfred was their only child, his parents could never bring themselves to part with him, beyond sending him for part of the year to the Hong-kong colony, to be educated among British surroundings. Just when a sufficient fortune had been

amassed, and they were intending returning to England, they both sickened, dying within a few weeks of one another. Owing to this, Alfred Deligne, about two years back, came to live in our town with his uncle, Mr John Leydon. He soon made friends in plenty, for his disposition was thought by everybody to be most amiable. It was no slight matter, either to himself or those who were interested in him, which of the two alternatives the servant-girl had mentioned was the true explanation of his present singular behaviour. The Miss Kate who had been seized with the fever was the second daughter of the widowed lady at whose door he had knocked, after an absence of three or four days, in consequence of his having been out of town; and although no formal engagement had, as yet, been made between her and Deligne, all their circle knew that was what he professedly hoped for. But if he could not compel himself to breathe for a moment or two the same atmosphere as she, because there was some risk in it, of what kind could his feelings towards her really be? Lovers—if love have not wholly changed—must still shew some courage, as of old. If they are no longer expected to fight dragons for their ladies fair, they, at least, should exhibit courage equal to the doctor's perfunctory bravery, when disease attacks the adored one. It is the friends of the young people who must be prudent for them. If love is not rash, we have no mark left to tell it by. However, young Mr Deligne hurried back through the streets to his own home at his uncle's residence, which was not more than ten or a dozen minutes' walk distant from Mrs Kesteven's mansion. Making straight for the sitting-room, he had put forth his hand to enter, when a small, childish voice sounded softly down the wide staircase at his side: 'Do not go in, Alfred. I have come out, for I did not think it right to stop. Uncle is doing what you don't like: he is making some more of his nasty diseases. Fever, he says, it will be this time.—Why, you are ill, Alfred!'

The speaker, a young lady, almost five years old, fresh from the forenoon toilet, radiant in

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ribboned hair and light muslin laced pinafore, rose from a sitting posture some dozen steps up the great sun-lighted staircase, and, holding her head gravely on one side, the better to survey him, descended in her cousin's direction.

He had paused at her first words, as if stricken with a new terror, his fingers hovering twitchingly over the door-handle, while his affrighted gaze was turned upon her. But a shrill exclamation now suddenly burst from him, and, with a blow of his fist, he struck the door open. 'Kate Kesteven has got the fever!' he cried quite loudly, in a tone so harsh, it was scarcely recognisable as his.

Within the sitting-room were two persons, a lady and a gentleman, both elderly; the one being Alfred Deligne's bachelor uncle; the other, his maiden aunt. This abrupt announcement greatly shocked them. Some little pieces of coloured paper fluttered from Mr Leydon's hand down to the table against which he was standing, as he turned towards his sister, who had thrown herself forward in her chair by the hearth. To fully understand the startling effect of the news, it should be stated that Mr Leydon was, in his amateur way, a scientific inquirer. Having no business to attend to, and being of a philosophical turn of mind, he filled up his time in this way, being a member of several learned societies. His visitors knew there were thermometrical tubes hung on the walls, and suspended from the trees in the garden at the back of the house. He had curiously contrived dew-gauges, wind-vanes for registering direction and pressure of the air-currents, electrometers, and other apparatus; and among his little mimicries of the great investigators, he regularly tested the state of the atmosphere with chemically prepared papers. That morning, he was at work in this odd fashion, and not many minutes previously he had announced, as the result of his examination of some ozone papers, that the air was not favourable for health, and that if the deterioration continued, it pointed towards fever. It was at this stage that 'Cissy,' the young lady of five whom Alfred found sitting outside upon the stairs, and who had long been frightened by this queer business, resolved to lend herself no longer to such dark practices, and silently left the room. Her elders now shared her feeling, for this unlooked-for confirmation of the scientific prediction had something horrifying in it. Mr Leydon's features grew as white as his hair, at such a vindication of his prescience; and Miss Betsy Leydon, his sister, had a scare on her round and habitually contented face that shewed all her feminine superstitions were aroused.

'John, you must not meddle with these things further. It cannot be right,' she said, her blue eyes glittering with alarm. 'Poor Kate! I must go to her mamma,' rising, and turning jerkily about, to lay down some needlework she had been busy with. 'I hope it is not serious; but one must not shrink from a little risk in such a case.—Where is Alfred?' she went on, straightening her dress in her characteristic bustling way, as if ready to start then and there.

'It is all very well to talk of statistics,' said Mr Leydon, the pride of science at this verification of his foreknowledge only inflating his tone just a very little; 'for you don't suppose the figures to mean anybody in particular. It is very shocking

to hear of Kate being seized.' His voice was quite natural by this time. 'Alfred!' he called.

But Alfred had vanished from the rudely opened door as soon as he had uttered the last startling word, and in his stead there now stood on the threshold Miss Cissy, bright tears streaming down her cheeks, but without the slightest contortion of feature to mark crying. 'Now, uncle, perhaps you will give over saying how many people shall die in a week. I knew something very bad would come. If Kate dies, Alfred will have to die, because he loves her.' All this was said quite gravely, with only just one final sob; the large, reproachful eyes swimming in tears, and every word evidently firmly believed.

'Nobody is going to die, Cissy,' hurriedly answered Aunt Betsy, running to the speaker, whose manner she understood well enough to see that she was greatly excited. Stooping, she kissed her, mixing her own short silver side-ringlets with the little lady's longer golden ones, whispering: 'You must not talk so.' Cissy was attacked with an hysterical shivering.

Mr Leydon had approached them, to go and make quest after Alfred. 'I do not say how many "shall" die; that is a great mistake, Cissy. I only mentioned what the calculations give as the number who it may be expected *will* die. Kate Kesteven will get better, no doubt.'

The odd ideas, however, had taken fast root in Cissy's mind. 'If she does not,' she impetuously answered, 'I will die next after Alfred. You will not go on doing it then, I know. Alfred always dislikes your doing it.'

Mr Leydon now had added to his previous shock the curious perplexity of this persistency in a juvenile accuser. For a moment, he stood looking at her, then patting her bright hair, while Aunt Betsy went on soothing her with caresses, he pushed past the two, saying he was going to find Alfred. It was a very bad blow for the poor lad.

But it was some time before he succeeded in hunting out his nephew. At length he discovered Alfred in the low greenhouse, at the very extremity of the back garden, sitting upon the ledge of the vine-wall, his figure curiously crushed together, as, with heavily drooping head, he stared on the ground before him. When his uncle neared him, he uplifted his ashy face, in which the eyes burned strangely. He said: 'Uncle, it is fever!' The utterance of the word shook him in every limb, and a look of the wildest affright distorted his features.

'Well, my boy, it is very sad; but we must hope for the best. It does not follow, although it is fever, that she will not recover. The probability is that she will, with youth on her side; for, I believe, the proportion of deaths is — But I can't talk figures about Kate. What did Mrs Kesteven say?'

'Mrs Kesteven?' Alfred's look grew blanker still. 'I do not recollect seeing her,' he added, evidently trying to think. 'I' — He broke off. His aunt bustling entered. Already she had hastily tossed on bonnet and shawl for her visit to the sufferer's home.

'She'll get better, Alfred; don't be depressed. You must take her flowers and grapes as soon as she begins to mend. I am going to speak a comforting word, if I can, to poor Mrs Kesteven. I'll tell them how it has shocked you.'

'O no, for God's sake!' he piteously implored, stumbling upon awkwardly to the standing posture. 'I'll try—I will, if it kills me! Don't let them know. I would die for Kate; but they said fever!' Again the word fell from his lips in a prolonged hiss, the previous agony fit of terror repeating itself. There was a minute's pause, during which his uncle and aunt looked wonderingly at him, and then to each other. 'You don't know what I mean,' he added, in the shrillest key of his voice. 'I shall lose Kate.'

'Not you; she'll get better,' reassuringly said his uncle.

'I mean then, for she'll think it is neglect. The servant will tell her how I came away. I am afraid of fever!' The expression of panic in his face was fearful to see, as he more slowly added: 'I shall not dare to go to the house!' He sank back against the vine-wall, with a shudder of his whole frame.

'Nonsense!' burst from his aunt's impulsive lips. 'No one must run unnecessary risks; but everybody must shew they are not cowards. You must call at the house, just to inquire.' Without waiting to note the effect of her words, she faced about, drawing her shawl together over her shoulders, and hastened off upon her errand. She at least was fearless.

Mr Leydon followed up his nephew, as he shrunk further away after the last remark of his aunt. 'Try and be calm, Alfred,' he soothingly said, gently forcing him on a bench-seat standing near. He tried to enter into further talk with him; but now he could get no answers. The young man sat staring before him in a kind of stupor, a strong shudder now and again shaking him. Mr Leydon, utterly perplexed by this demeanour, at last quitted him, and, going outside, paced to and fro along an adjoining walk in sheer bewilderment. In the course of a very few minutes, he observed Cissy flutter across the lawn, and make for the greenhouse, into which she vanished. Going to the door, he softly opened it. He saw she had crept to Alfred's side, and was talking to him caressingly, in her old-fashioned way.

'Perhaps he is himself going to be ill!' solemnly said Mr Leydon. 'I must go to Wilson.' Wilson was the family doctor. Mr Leydon crept away from the greenhouse door on this errand, as noiselessly as Cissy had glided thither on hers.

It would seem that the secret was only too sadly out—Alfred Deligne was afraid for himself!

## CHAPTER II.

The mystery of this sudden and inexplicable fright which had seized upon Deligne heightened, instead of lessened, when time passed on without removing it. Throughout the rest of the day on which he got the first shock, and again during the whole of the day following, he exhibited the same perfect panic of stupid terror with which he startled his uncle and aunt in the conservatory. At any suggestion of his stirring out of doors, after he had once returned into the house, a renewed paroxysm of alarm shook him. He would come no farther than a room that was called his study, next door to his chamber; there the astonished domestics had to serve his meals. Even in that seclusion, he seemed to be afraid of the very light; he kept the curtains nearly quite drawn; and he nervously

shrunk from the slightest breath of air. Little Cissy was all the company he wished for. It was in vain that his aunt brought him repeated news that Kate Kesteven's attack was only a slight one—making it out, indeed, to be of less importance than it at first really was; equally in vain was it that Dr Wilson and his uncle assured him there were not many cases of the disease in the town. The idea that there was fever near him—that somewhere in the atmosphere, with its lying sunshine and fatal mildness of current, death was floating—fully mastered his imagination, leaving him wholly without power of reasoning. It was a case of monomania: his feelings had passed completely beyond his own control.

This was proved most clearly on the third day. Mr Leydon, acting upon the counsel of Dr Wilson, who thought this lethargy should not be allowed to confirm itself, exercised his authority to the extent of insisting that Alfred should fully dress and walk out with him. The victim of this strange panic resisted and implored; still his uncle remained firm. However, the high-handed course ended in making matters worse. Scarcely had the shrinking Alfred, pale as a corpse, and with eyes wild from terror, been urged, so to speak, across the threshold into the open street, than, casting his glance up to the surrounding houses, standing out so clear and bright in the plague-tainted air, he uttered a low cry, and fell headlong on the pavement, striking the curb-stone heavily. He was assisted back into the house, quite exhausted. Dr Wilson forbade any further attempts to force him, and thenceforward treated him as an invalid, expressing a fear that this singular mental prepossession would induce an attack of the fever, which had grown more and more rife. But no symptoms of that kind appeared.

'If he was really ill—I don't say of fever, not that, but of something,' said his bewildered aunt, 'then the thing might be hushed up.' It was spoken in a way that suggested she really would not object to a slight illness, just to bring him to his senses. 'But after what the servant told Mrs Kesteven of his turning away from the door, and his not going near since, it is of no use my pretending any more excuses. Everybody knows it.'

The grounds for this conclusion were apparent enough. Friends had come to the house; Alfred had been asked for; and the explanations necessarily got lamer and lamer with each occasion. After a few days, the whole circle of their acquaintance knew of this astounding cowardice. He was himself fully aware that they knew it. When the first fright had weakened a little, the thought of these consequences came into full play in his mind, and the humiliation and shame of his position appeared to crush him yet more completely. Still he could make no effort to reverse matters; he was morally paralysed. Day after day passed over, until nearly a fortnight had elapsed. One evening, Dr Wilson and Mr Leydon were in the sitting-room together, when Aunt Betsy returned from the bitter trial of a further visit to the Kestevens, bringing news that Kate was getting on very favourably. Mr Leydon saw that his sister was, as usual, upon each repetition of these visits, in a state of increased worry.

'Dr Wilson agrees with me more and more, Betsy,' he hastened to say, 'that it must be owing to some wretched superstition bred into him when

abroad, and of which he is, perhaps, himself not clearly aware.'

'Then he will have to go abroad for a wife. Young Tuffnel will marry Kate Kesteven as soon as she gets well—see if he does not. He called again with a bouquet just as I came away. But I never expected to hear you advise that he should marry a Chinese woman!'

'Betsy!' mildly expostulated Mr Leydon. 'Did I advise so?'

'O dear! You must forgive me, and you, too, Dr Wilson;' and the silver-haired lady turned to the portly gentleman standing on the hearth, who instantly bowed most cordially. 'There; I was coming to kiss you, John, before I had changed my things,' checking her impulsive advance about the middle of the room; 'I do so from here,' raising herself on tiptoe, and throwing her brother a kiss. 'My poor head is in a whirl. Mrs Kesteven says, a milder case of fever, to be distinctly pronounced, was never known. Of course I understood why she dwelt so on that. I will go and change my clothes. Of all the children we have had on our hands, this is the worst trouble of all,' sighed the spinster lady, quitting the room.

The very unsatisfactory hypothesis Mr Leydon had suggested to her, for about the fiftieth time, was all that the utmost puzzling of his wits had been able to contrive in the way of explanation. The foundations for it were very slight. It had been learned from Cissy that Alfred had never concealed from her a fear of diseases; his apprehensions, indeed, had impregnated her with the passionate dislike she had shewn in the matter. Also, Mr Leydon now recollected what had been to him the disappointing want of sympathy with his own scientific pursuits Alfred had always manifested. Finally, there was the corroboration of Dr Wilson's statement, as to its being known in the profession that an irrational fear of disease and death was constitutional in some cases, and might even be contracted from early impressions, when children were very badly trained. 'Let us go and see him, doctor,' said Mr Leydon, on Aunt Betsy leaving them. It was with that object Dr Wilson had called.

They went to Alfred's own little sitting-room up-stairs, which had been dignified with the name of his study. As they entered, Miss Cissy, in pursuance of what she knew was expected from her, rose from a hassock at her cousin's feet, and sailed out of the apartment, not well pleased that she was not taken into entire confidence. She only very stiffly returned Dr Wilson's friendly salutation. The room was lighted by a lamp upon the table, for although it was not yet dusk, the curtains were drawn: the inmate felt more at ease with artificial light than that of the day, which brought fever in its sunshine. He was stooping forward, with hanging head, in a chair close by the fire. His general appearance was much worn by the nervous excitement he had suffered; his eyes had a wild glitter in them, and his complexion was of a swarthy sickly gray. The two elder gentlemen entered into talk with him, in that constrained style which invariably characterises insincere conversations, purposely directed to every topic but the one in the minds of the talkers. But gradually they veered round to his own case, and then a very painful scene occurred.

'I know everybody thinks I am a coward,' said

Alfred, rising to his feet; 'but I am not afraid of suffering.'

Before they were aware of what he was going to do, he had advanced to the table, and thrust his hand into the lamp, holding it in the very heart of the flame. Dr Wilson, who was standing nearest, clutched his arm, and withdrew it; his uncle also gripped him, and, in his alarm, shook him vigorously. The desperate actor of this piece of madness seemed to grow all the calmer for their agitation. 'Please, attend to it, doctor,' he said, unhesitatingly relinquishing his badly burned hand to examination. 'I only wished to shew you that I can bear pain.'

The little tumult this extraordinary incident unavoidably caused, and Mr Leydon's half-explanations, when he hurried away to fetch the first immediate remedies the doctor called for, quickly brought Miss Betsy upon the scene. She soon rallied from the shock, and, oddly enough, grew tenderer to Alfred from that moment. Unable to comprehend his previous unreasonable conduct, he had no sooner committed this new act of folly, than, somehow, she was quite satisfied! This piece of childishness was intelligible to her, though the other was not. She patted him, she cried in a cheerful way, she hung about him, to assist the doctor; in a word, she tacitly applauded her nephew's spirit. Perhaps the explanation of this was that she was a woman, and the only failing the sex cannot ultimately forgive to a man is want of courage. A change passed upon Alfred himself. His spirits very perceptibly rose; he did not hide his bandaged hand—he rather displayed it; the wildness in his look decreased. This act of his, and the sympathies expressed for him in consequence of it, had, in some unintelligible way, weakened the spell that was upon him. When Dr Wilson was taking his leave, he turned to him, and said: 'My weakness is very silly, though I cannot help it; but I will master it yet!'

The shiver accompanying this avowal of intention shewed the effort it cost him to make it. Still, it was something that he should frame the resolve. Dr Wilson encouraged him in it, and exchanged a hopeful whisper with his older friends when he took his departure. 'Things,' he said, 'might be none the worse for what had happened.'

Very soon, Cissy somehow got hold of the secret of what had occurred, and, while she cried at the thought of the pain, which her childish imagination of course exaggerated, she clapped her hands frantically, sobbing out: 'I knew Alfred wasn't afraid. He spoke to the black dog in the street—he spoke to the black dog in the street—he spoke to the black dog in the street.' As she repeated it, she stamped upon the carpet, becoming so excited that there was difficulty in quieting her.

From that evening began a struggle on the part of Alfred Deligne, the real heroism of which should not be depreciated because of the oddity of the whole matter. The next morning, he left his room, and ventured into the garden. Mr Leydon had gone through some self-sacrifices of his own, in preparation for Alfred's reappearance there. He had taken down his glasses and gauges from the walls and trees, making a clearance of all his scientific apparatus. Strange as the fact was, Alfred Deligne shewed himself positively afraid of the light and air: his look, his timid step, his whole bearing proved it. A flash of sunshine was



sufficient to startle him—a puff of wind over the roofs of the adjoining dwellings brought the perspiration out upon his face. It was evident that everything had plague associations coupled with it in his diseased fancy. Cissy, walking gravely by his side, cheered him; and his aunt and uncle, without daring to interfere too much, did what they could to encourage him. When evening brought dusk with it, he crept half-furtively out into the street, whither his uncle followed, keeping at a short distance in his rear. A dozen times, Mr Leydon saw him stop and struggle with himself; but he persisted until he reached a corner from whence could be seen the lighted windows of Mrs Kesteven's mansion. He returned home very pale, but with an elated expression on his features at this carrying out of his resolve, and he spoke of himself more frankly than before. He said he could not understand the strange feelings he had laboured under; everybody in the town seemed to be going about as usual, and why should not he? The next day his pleased aunt bore him off with her in a vehicle, on a shopping excursion. As they were returning, they saw an invalid carriage turning out of the crescent, a young lady reclining in it, propped with cushions, and assiduously attended by two other ladies, one much older than herself, Mr Charles Tuffnel filling the post of coachman for the nonce, and driving most carefully. After one long eager fascinated stare, Alfred sank back into the corner of his seat. He murmured: 'I can never look them in the face again! Kate must have thought it very cruel of me. It was not; but I can give no explanations. I hope Charles Tuffnel will make her a good husband.'

His aunt sat in silence. She knew his hopes in that quarter were quite destroyed. Kate Kesteven, she inferred, was on her way to the sea-side. On reaching home, Alfred, wholly crushed again, hurried to his own solitary quarters—solitary, that is, excepting for the presence of Cissy, who quickly made her way there.

'I am sure it has to do in some way with his early bringing up,' persistently repeated Mr Leydon, when he and Aunt Betsy were left alone.

'But I never heard of men—I say men—being brought up like this, in any part of the world,' discontentedly replied the lady. 'I had taken more pains to bring about the affair between him and Kate Kesteven than in marrying the three other children I have got off your hands.'

It was so. Bachelor as was Mr Leydon, and spinster as was Aunt Betsy, they had had plenty to do with children, and with the marriages of others. They were the only two out of a large family who had remained single, and for thirty years past they had lived together in the house occupied by their parents before them. Some of the brothers and sisters, so far from remaining celibate, had wedded more than once; and several of them had wandered off with their husbands or their wives nearly to the ends of the world, in search of fortune. When these had broken down in life's battle, or when life itself was leaving them, they had each and all bequeathed themselves of the old home and John and Betsy. With a certain sort of prescriptive right, they had remitted to them, or bequeathed to them, a succession of nephews and nieces to bring up and settle in life. In fact, the bachelor brother and the maiden sister had supported, trained, and started in the world

the largest family of all. For the last twenty years, their relatives would have been shocked by the unmeaningness, not to say the ingratitude, of either of them thinking of marrying with anybody. Had they not provided them with children of both sexes and of all ages—what more could they want? However, they had now nearly got through the list. The last two were upon their hands: Alfred Deligne, who had come to them, as we have said, from China; and 'Cissy' Waters, the child of a different sister, who had appeared from the antipodes. But we must return to our story.

The cases of fever in the town progressively decreased; the little mimic plague withdrew as mysteriously as it came. Men of science might have some inkling, more or less correct, as to the reason, but common people had none. All that they could fall back upon was a doubtful self-persuasion that, on the whole, the air had turned a little colder. The sunshine altered no hue, the breeze was not perceptibly different. Some secret change, however, had taken place in the atmosphere—a little more of this gaseous element, or a little less of that; and the inhabitants could breathe the air again without one of a group sickening and dying in the midst of the rest, whose health became as unintelligible as the other's death. Somewhat to Dr Wilson's surprise, Alfred wholly escaped the fever, but his general health suffered. He continued to combat his own feelings, and so far succeeded, that he went about again much as usual, with the exception of shrinking from all society. But day by day he grew emaciated and pallid. Dr Wilson advised that he should go into the country, to a relative's they had living there; and it was so arranged.

'Uncle,' he said, in a side-whisper, as he got into the train at the station, 'I know why you wish me to go; but I don't expect it will do me much good. I shall never rest, nor be myself again, till I have shewn I am not a coward.'

Cissy sadly wished to go away with him; but this was now wholly out of the question. Her governess had returned, and lessons were to recommence. The ever-ready tears flowed, but, as usual, they were the only marks of crying. She at least was determined to be brave.

## MY BEES.

I HAVE kept bees in a small way for some time, and was on the point of writing down my experiences for the benefit of those who wished to eat their own honey, upwards of a year ago, when the Bee-master's letters in the *Times* prevented me. I am not a bee-master, only a bee-scholar, and have not learned very much. But the few things I do know have been puzzled out very slowly, and tested with great care, and they go to establish no preconceived theory, but are as practical as bread and butter. The cause of my retaining the idea of publishing them is the wonderful ignorance of the very first rudiments of bee-keeping still existing amongst well-educated people who have gardens, in spite of all the popular treatises on the subject. Why, not long ago, I lunched with Dr Mac-Hey of Sunshinshire, a man whose knowledge is generally considered as boundless as his hospitality; and after the meal, he gave me a cigar, and took me round his garden. Presently, we came to a row of bee-hives, twelve at

least, all whose inhabitants were so hard at work that the united hum was like that of a thrashing-machine. I made a dead stop.

'Ah,' said the doctor, 'I like to watch these little fellows; they are so cheerful over their work.'

'You must have plenty of honey,' said I.

'Well, no,' he replied: 'I do not get any honey from them. To tell the truth, I cannot make up my mind to have them stifled.'

'Stifled!' I almost shrieked: 'I thought that barbarity was as extinct as the burning of witches. You should never kill a bee. All you have to do is to make a hole in the roof of your hive in the spring, and stick another smaller hive on the top of it. In the autumn, you slip a sheet of tin between the two hives, to cut off the communication; carry off the top one full of honey for yourself, and leave them the bottom one for their winter provision. You get your golden eggs, and don't kill your goose.'

'Oh!' said he. 'I have heard of some such system, but did not know it answered practically.'

I determined on the spot to write down the results of my experience, and here they are.—I suppose that you have a small garden, and wish to keep some bees in it, but are contented to begin in a very humble way, as I was; only desiring a little amusement, and honey without much expense or trouble. Then buy a stock in the autumn or winter; or if you cannot get one, obtain a swarm in the early spring. But take care that the hive is in good condition, flat on the top, with a hole in the centre fitted with a bung; and be sure you see that it is placed on a good thick comfortable board, projecting well before the entrance-hole. I cannot make out that the aspect matters much; but be careful to place your hive on a firm stand, which cannot be knocked or blown over, and in such a situation that you can get conveniently at the back of it. On the edge of a path, with the back towards it, is a capital site: it is true that the gardener may dislike digging close in front of the bees; but that is a trifle. He must cultivate those two or three yards on cold or wet days, or late in the afternoon. If he does not heed them, they will not annoy him at any time, unless you have been trying experiments on them: they do hate that. Never mind about having a shed over the hive; it only harbours spiders, who catch the bees in their webs; moths, who get inside the hive, and lay eggs which turn to larvae, and destroy the comb; snails, who will also crawl into it, and worry the inhabitants out of their senses; and other such vermin. A good heavy red earthenware milkpan is the best sectum for a hive. If you desire an ornamental affair to set off a portion of your garden, that is a totally different matter; I cannot advise you. But if simplicity and cheapness are attractive to you, I can tell you that those qualities are the most likely to insure success. This is a hard fact for an Englishman to digest. Many an individual of slight apian tendencies (do not be alarmed, dear Mrs Grundy; they have nothing to do with *Essays and Reviews*) enters some such establishment as the exhibition of working-bees at the Crystal Palace (and a most excellent and interesting one it is, or was), and is frightened out of his half-formed intention of having a hive or two—it seems such a business. There is the glass-case, invented for the purpose of shewing the most minute domestic occurrences amongst the

little creatures; indeed, so far is the spirit of inquiry carried, that the exhibitor announces, 'Her Majesty has just laid an egg!' when that event happens, which is really pushing inquisitiveness beyond the limits of the *Court Circular*, if that be possible: he determines at once not to have that; but amongst the other contrivances for housing bees he wanders perplexed. The one great recommendation of any particular hive or box seems to be, that it affords greater facility than the others for acting as a sort of Gulliver in Lilliput, and directing the labours of the community; removing old rotten comb; examining the honey, to see that the winter store has not crystallised, in which case it would be useless to them; &c. And so the novice gets an impression that a proprietor of bees has to be a providential king-bee himself, with a good chance of being stung to death while establishing his authority, and shrinks from his purpose in dismay. Or perhaps his purse is a slender one, and he is frightened by the paraphernalia of feeding, fumigating, comb-cutting, honey-straining apparatus which appeal to it.

If, instead of going to an exhibition of bees, he buys a book about them, he is liable to be still more appalled by the minute and intricate directions contained in it—the things it seems necessary to do, the articles he is told to buy. There is no fault to be found with the work—indeed, the most popular of these little hand-books are excellent; but it is, of course, their business to put you up to the last new dodge in bee-keeping. Read by the light of practical experience, they are stepping-stones; without it, stumbling-blocks. The judicious tyro, indeed, might, without much difficulty, adopt what was simple, and eschew the rest; but many tyros are not judicious.

Now, what I have to say is simply this—that, as far as my experience goes, the less fuss and bother you make with your bees, and the more homely the arrangements you provide for them, the more successful you will be. The old fable about the bad luck attending a stock or swarm for which money is paid, is not so much a superstition as a myth, the interpretation of which is, that if you want plenty of honey, you had better not waste your cash on elaborate contrivances. A bee wants her house to be warm, dry, and dark; and when you have provided her with one which combines those requisites, her comfort is insured. Of course, if you like to take the roof off, open the windows, and watch all that goes on; or if it amuse you to note the temperature of the interior, and ventilate it whenever the thermometer rises above a certain height, you can. Only remember, all this is to please yourself, not the bees, and it will not improve your harvest.

Of course, there is a preference in hives: it is better to have a rim of wood round the bottom, because that prevents the straw from wearing out; and if the top is not straw at all, but mahogany, or some hard wood which will not crack or shrink, it will save you trouble when you put the super on in the spring, and take it off in the autumn. But that is all. Again, it is an advantage to have a little window in the super, or top hive, because it is interesting to see how your share of honey is getting on. Or, if it is full of comb—not only filled, but *sealed*—early in the summer, it is of real use to discover the fact, for you may take the spoils at once, exchanging the full cap for an empty

one, and giving your family honeycomb for breakfast—which families like. The little window, then, in the super is a real advantage, and you should always have one. If you can get only blind hives in your neighbourhood, cut a hole with your pen-knife, and mortar a bit of glass in for yourself. Of still more importance is the shape of the super: it should be low and broad; the higher it is, the longer the bees take in filling it. But the worst-shaped straw super is better than the best-shaped glass. I hate glasses: they look very pretty, I own, and adorn a breakfast-table—but that is all that can be said for them. The bees do not take to them kindly; they will go up into them sometimes and begin making comb, and then suddenly strike work, and swarm. And for a bee-keeper who attends to his bees himself, instead of merely superintending, swarming is a serious nuisance. But if you must have glasses, get low-crowned ones; the trade will try to force bell-glasses upon you (why, I cannot imagine), but don't you have them; the others are to be had, let them say what they will. Why, even Neighbour's Cottage Hive, which I bought on the recommendation of a capital shilling hand-book (which, by-the-bye, also declaims against bell-glasses), is fitted with three of the odious things; and I lost pounds and pounds of honey before I finally made up my mind to discard them, being diffident, and thinking Neighbour, with his great experience, must know best. In other respects, the hive is a good one, with a little thermometer, which imposes on strangers, and other natty conveniences; but not a whit better than others one quarter the cost. But then it is not always easy to get decent hives at all, and if you live near London, Neighbour's is mighty convenient. Only be firm, and refuse the bell-glasses. The best investment you can make at his shop is in mahogany circular boards, with holes in the middle; for they are very good, and never shrink or curl.

When you put on your super, which should be directly the bees begin to work in real earnest in the spring, you pull the bung out of the hole in the top of the hive (I prefer covering it with a little straw-mat myself; if you do too, remove that), so that the bees can come up; you fit one of the boards on to the top, so that the hole in the centre corresponds with that in the hive; you place a second board, with a similar corresponding aperture, upon this, and then you put your super hive upon this last, cover the whole with the milk-pan, if any wind is blowing, to keep all snug till the bees have glued the super firmly to the board, which they will soon do; and then the less you interfere with them the better, until it is time to take this super, or top hive, and sack the honey. Now it is you find the advantage of your two boards, for you pass your sheet of tin quietly between them, and so cut off the communication as comfortably as possible. Then, half an hour afterwards, you carry off your top board, with the super still upon it, to any dark room with a little bit of open window left visible, and there you leave it. Give the bees in it time enough, and they will all come away, and fly back to the stock-hive where the queen is, and leave you in quiet possession of your share of the honey.

But, supposing the queen should be in the super? Well, that would be awkward; the main body might come to it, perhaps. I never knew of such

a case. The hand-books tell you how to hedge against it; but their directions are very bewildering, and no authority that I have read mentions such a thing as having happened: the queen stops below. Yet I have heard of brood-comb being found in a super, and the queen must have visited it in that case to lay the eggs. By-the-bye, if there should be any brood-comb, the bees will not leave it, and then you had better replace the super until the juveniles are hatched. But I have never been bothered by that difficulty myself, and therefore suppose it to be exceptional.

I am almost ashamed to write down such simple directions, which are to be found in every modern treatise on bee-keeping; yet I am sure that anybody who was puzzled what to do with his first hive, would be glad of these few practical hints, standing out clear from all the elaborate directions with which they are wont to be entangled.

I was abusing swarming just now, and it is a very troublesome business; but if you want to increase your number of hives without purchase, you must make your bees swarm. You do that by letting them alone in the spring, and not giving them the increased room by capping them. It is very provoking if they get clear off while no one is watching, and go to enrich some neighbour's apiary. That is what generally happens to me; but then the premises are not extensive, and a few yards suffice to carry a swarm into the grounds of a cantankerous market-gardener, who would no more assist me to find it than he would give me his blessing. If, however, you are surrounded by civil folk, or own several acres, you will probably get your pilgrim bees; for they do not travel far without settling, if you let them be quiet. Our ancestors used to hunt them all over the parish with rough music, and you can do the same if you want a little excitement and excuse for trespass. When the swarm has resolved itself into a live pudding, shake it into a hive, and you have it. It reads easy, does it not? And if the queen selects an easy bough for her resting-place, it is not a difficult operation practically. But queen-bees are often perverse, and then it is a nasty job, especially on a hot day, which it mostly is.

For example, last year I had reason for wanting a pretty-looking glassful of honeycomb, so I capped a strong hive with one instead of a straw super. The bees flocked into it, and commenced comb-making, so I thought it was all right; but on visiting my colony one fine morning after breakfast, and carefully lifting up a corner of the black cover which darkened the glass, I found it empty, and its late inhabitants as excited as Parisians on the eve of an *émeute*; and a little while afterwards a swarm issued forth, and went careering about high in the air, finally settling in a lump under the bough of a pear-tree at some distance from the ground. I had no spare hive by me, so the first thing to be done was to get one, and I rushed off to the nearest town for that purpose, and for some time could meet with nothing but absurd things with rounded tops—the regular old-fashioned bee-hive shape, such as you have seen in pictures. At last, however, I managed to procure an awkward thing, somewhat too small, and rounded off towards the top, but still flattish at the very crown, and with a hole in the middle of it, and returned with it in my hand. Then, having got an alighting-board and everything else I might



want ready, I set a pair of steps up under the pear-tree, and invoked the aid of the household. A sister, Susannah the housemaid, and the cook responded nobly to the appeal, and we commenced operations. I ascended gingerly to the summit of the steps, which wobbled uncomfortably, for the ground underneath had been recently dug into potato-trenches; and when my weight bore more on one side than another, the corresponding leg of the steps sank deeper into the soft earth. At last I contrived to balance myself on the top, and found that by stretching upwards on tiptoe I could just hold the hive up to the pendent swarm. The next question was, how to shake it in? My sister brought out a rope, and suggested that the bough might be sufficiently agitated by its agency; so I fastened it, threw the end down, and held up the hive. First my sister alone pulled and jerked, then Susannah joined, and finally cook added her strength; but the united efforts of all three could but sway the branch gracefully up and down, and a swarm to be taken must be well shaken. Then they tried sudden jerks, and succeeded in dropping a few bees into the hive, and disturbing some hundreds, who detached themselves from the bunch, and flew about my ears, crawled up my sleeves, and tickled my neck. We were pounded; and the swarm might be in the pear-tree to this day if Susannah had not had an inspiration. She seized a long piece of wood which happened to lie in the yard, and coming under the bough, banged it as close to the swarm as she could without hitting it, and the sudden jars began to dislodge the bees in earnest, so that they dropped by handfuls into the hive. Still the process was a slow one; and if you can picture my position to yourself, you may believe that I had had about enough of it. My arms ached till I could hardly hold the hive, which was getting heavy, up any longer, and the difficulty of keeping my balance increased every minute. Then cook, improving Susannah's discovery, brought up a heavy clothes-post, and battered the bough: that was the true solution of the difficulty; at the second blow, the whole lump, queen and all, fell plump into the hive; and now I might come down, if I could—without falling, I mean. Well, I did not actually go over, but was so near it, that I had to grasp the hive in a fresh place, to avoid dropping it, and so crushed some bees, who naturally stung me.

If you are a man and a smoker, always light your pipe before doing anything with your bees; if one gets angry, and attacks you, a puff will drive him away; or supposing you are wanting to set a hive with a newly taken swarm, say, down on its alighting-board, and the provoking insects will insist on getting under the edges, where they will be crushed, a few whiffs will make them withdraw, and save dozens of lives. You may not care for a sting, but remember that the bee who stings you performs the *harri-kari*, and dies, poor thing. I have twice endeavoured to soar into the regions of high-art aparianism, and on each occasion have met with a terrible fiasco. The details of one may serve in a measure to buoy the shoals, by shewing where I blundered.

Late in the summer, a friend and neighbour sent me word one day that there was a swarm of bees in his garden belonging to nobody, and that I had better have it, as he himself would not keep the things on any account, having a superstition about

their stinging propensities, which, by-the-bye, are about as strong as yours would be, if you lost your life by the act. I was pleased enough, for I had got a brand-new cottage hive, with three windows, and a little thermometer; and I was naturally anxious that it should be tenanted. I had forced another hive to swarm in the spring for that purpose; but the provoking insects took their flight on the very afternoon that the watch upon them, which had been kept up strictly for a month, was relaxed, and where they went I don't know—certainly not into my smart hive. Well, I went off to my friend's garden, and sure enough there was a small cast hanging in a favourable position, and I soon had them in the hive, and transferred them in the evening to my own garden. But the hive was a very large one, and the swarm a very small one, and it was just at the end of the season, so that all the bees could do for themselves was to build in one corner two or three combs, perfectly destitute of honey. Here was an opportunity for trying that uniting of swarms which is so strongly recommended by all modern writers on bee-keeping. I had another hive, strong in population, rich in honey, but in a most dilapidated condition. The sides actually gaped in places, and I had been obliged to bind it together with rope coiled round it, till it looked like a capstan. I determined to try and transfer the community in the rotten old hive to the new one, and then feed up the united kingdom with the honey taken from the former: for bees will make comb, and store up honey, if fed out of the season, either with the real article or barley-sugar, just as well as they will from the flowers and blossoms, when they are available.

I studied my books, then, and fixing upon chloroform as the simplest stupefying medium, made all necessary preparations, and commenced two hours after sunset. First of all, I passed a bit of string between the old hive and its alighting-board, for the straw is always glued tightly to the wood, and unless you take some such precaution, you cannot wrench the two asunder without a commotion it was my particular object to avoid. Then gently raising the hive, thus loosened, I thrust in a piece of rag saturated with chloroform, and let it down again sharply; only two bees escaping, and about three getting crushed. Simultaneously, however, two or three more rushed out at the proper entrance, which I had forgotten to close. But this mistake was rectified in a moment, and so far there was not much harm done.

Presently, such a buzz arose as you may hear if you are about half a mile from the ring at Epsom an hour before the Derby. The murmur grew fainter, fainter, ceased entirely. The books promised that I should now find all the bees lying senseless on the board; and on raising the hive, I saw that the greater number were so heaped together, and poured them upon a white dish; but there were thousands of strong-headed bees still crawling about the top of the hive and the combs. 'A few sharp taps will dislodge them,' said the books. Sharp taps applied dislodged perhaps twenty. Sharper tap brought down a great piece of comb, smothering a lot of bees in their own honey, crushing others, and making everything sticky and awkward to manipulate. Still so many bees remained, that there was nothing for it but to give them another dose of chloroform; and with this, and more tapping, and



falling comb, and honey-drowning, the majority were added to their compatriots in the white dish, who were beginning to crawl about a little. I now gave the inhabitants of the other hive (the new one) a taste of chloroform, and then turning it topsy-turvy, and taking off the board, I sprinkled the lot with a little boiled beer and sugar; and then giving the bees in the white dish a similar aspersion, I poured them upon the others in the new hive, replaced the board, turned the hive over, and set it in its natural position, and went away with the old hive, an enormous weight of honey, numerous drowned and crushed bees, remorse for my awkwardness, some hope of partial success, and considerable joy that the job was over somehow. It had been part of my plan to discover and put out of the way, for political reasons, the queen of the old hive; but the bees recovered from their stupefaction quicker than I bargained for, and I could not find her. However, the book said that did not matter; the bees themselves would undertake that delicate business.

Next morning, I went early to see how the union was getting on: not very well. When two bees met one another, they had a little tussle, fell to the ground together, and then flew off in separate directions. There did not seem to be any serious fighting, but these little tiffs were very general. I thought that perhaps it might be well to provide them with a little wholesome occupation, so I gave them a couple of pounds of honeycomb on a plate, placed on the top of the hive, opened the communication, and covered it carefully with another hive. Well, whether I inadvertently left some crevice between this hive and the top of the other, by which the bees could get at the honey in the plate without passing through the hive, and robber-bees from all the country round discovered the fact, and joined in a general attack, I do not certainly know; but though I was aware of the danger, and took pains to prevent it, I strongly suspect that this was the real reason why the air was presently filled with infuriated combatants engaged in mortal combat, while the honey dropped from them like spray. You never saw such fierce fighting. In an hour's time the whole surface of the garden was covered with dead bees, and the hive was so weakened, that feed and cosset them as we might through the winter, they became fewer and fewer in the early spring, and finally died out.

What became of the queen? When the evening arrived that no single subject returned, did she at length issue from the deserted hive and wing her solitary, hopeless, purposeless flight into space? All I know is that the useless comb contained not her body.

The sight of that empty silent hive was positively depressing, for you get a very friendly feeling towards bees; and as your affection is for a community, not an individual, you are only liable to have it severed by accident or mismanagement. Perhaps there are some superior beings who take the interest in human communities that we do in apiarian; and watch with interest England, or Italy, or Japan, instead of barely distinguishable units.

You will say that my fiasco tells nothing against the uniting of swarms. I reply, that I never supposed it did; but it tells, with me, against my doing it. I am too clumsy for such delicate work,

and even if the main object were accomplished, should be sure to mangle, drown, and stifle dozens of my friends in the operation. In future, I intend feeding a weak hive through the autumn with as much barley-sugar as they will stow away, and letting them take their chance. Home-made barley-sugar it must be, mind you. Fill a pipkin with loaf-sugar, add a quarter of a tumbler of water with a dash of vinegar in it, not much, and boil it for some time, till all crystallisation is destroyed. Then—I am going to impart a great discovery, the only one I have ever made—do not encumber yourself with feeding-troughs; do not cut your barley-sugar into sticks, and thrust them into the hive, as generally recommended, but follow my plan. Pour your liquid sugar into saucers and flower-pot stands, and there let it harden. Then take the bung out of your hive, and cover the hole with one of the saucers, sugar-side downwards; place an empty hive over it, balance your milk-pan upon that, and leave it. When the bees have cleared one saucer out, which they will do in a couple of days or so, change it for another, and so on till you think they have got enough. That is the only original direction in this paper, which has run on to greater length than I intended; yet I cannot dismount from my hobby without a protest against the custom of moralising about bees, and holding them up as patterns of commercial industry. A more epicurean set never lived. Fancy spending one's summer in hovering about and sucking sherry-cobblers; storing up what one could not manage to drink at the time, indeed; but, in revenge, doing nothing but sleep and sip all the winter! If you do not work harder than that, reader, you are a lucky fellow.

## BRED IN THE BONE.

### CHAPTER XXVII.—ATTORNEY AND CLIENT.

In a hall of stone stood a room of glass, and in that room the inmates of Cross Key Jail were permitted to have access to their legal advisers. They were not lost sight of by the jealous guardians of the place, one of whom perambulated the hall throughout the interview; but though he could see all that passed, he could hear nothing. Mr Weasel of Plymouth was very well known at Cross Key as being a frequent visitor to that transparent apartment, and those prisoners whom he favoured with his attentions were justly held in high estimation by the warders, as gentlemen who, though in difficulties, had at least some considerable command of ready money. He was waiting now, with his hat on (which he always wore, to increase his very limited stature), in this chamber of audience; and so withered up he looked, and such a sharp shrunk face he had, that Richard seeing him in the glass case, might have thought him some dried specimen of humanity, not alive at all, had he not chanced to be in the act of taking snuff, and even that was ghostly too, since it produced the pantomimic action of sneezing without its accompanying sound.

'Mr Richard Yorke, I believe?' said he, as soon as they were shut up within the walls of glass. 'I am glad to make your acquaintance, sir, though I wish, for your sake, that it happened in another place.—You'll excuse my not offering you my hand.'

Richard drew back his extended arm and turned crimson.

'Don't be offended, sir,' said the lawyer; 'but the fact is, the authorities here don't like it. There are some parties in this place who employ very queer legal advisers; and in shaking hands, a file, or a gimblet, and a bit of tobacco are as likely to pass as not. That warden can see everything, my dear young sir; but he can no more hear what we say, than he can understand what a couple of bumble-bees are murmuring about who are barred up in a double window. We can therefore converse with one another as much without reserve as we please, or rather'—and here the little man's eyes twinkled significantly—'as you please. What I hear from a client in this ridiculous place, is never revealed beyond it, except so far as it may serve his interests. If Mr Dudge (to whose favour, as I understand, I owe this introduction) has told you anything concerning me, he will, I am sure, have advised you to be quite frank and candid.'

'There was no necessity for such a warning, Mr Weasel, in my case, I do assure you,' answered Richard earnestly. 'I have nothing to conceal from you with respect to the circumstances of my position: they are unfortunate, and doubtless very suspicious; but I am as innocent of this disgraceful charge'—

'Hush, hush! my dear sir; this will never do. It is mere waste of time, though it might have been much worse. Good heavens! suppose you had been guilty, and told me *that!* you would have placed me in the most embarrassing situation, as your professional adviser, it is possible for the human mind to conceive. What I want to know is *your* story, so far as these two thousand pounds found in your possession are concerned. Whether it is true or not, does not matter a button. I want to know whether it *seems* true; whether it will seem true to a judge and jury. You have thought the matter over, of course; you have gone through it in your own mind from beginning to end—now please to go over it to me.'

The little man whipped out a note-book, leaned forward in his chair, and looked all eye and ear, like a terrier watching at a rat-hole.

After a moment's pause, Richard stated his case pretty much as we are already acquainted with it; the little lawyer interrupting him now and then by a gesture, but never by a word, in order that he might set down a point or a memorandum.

'Very good,' said Mr Weasel, when he had quite finished. 'That's your story, is it?'

'It's the truth, sir.'

'Hush! my dear young sir. We shall have enough of that—the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth—a fortnight hence. What you and I have to consider are the probabilities. Why did you go to Plymouth, more than any other place, to change these notes?'

'Because I had heard there was a Miners' Bank there, and Trevethick had mentioned the notes of that company as being as good, in his opinion, as those of the Bank of England. I thought it would be easier to get the mining notes in exchange for those of the Bank of England, than others of the same bank.'

'The cheque which you shewed this Trevethick was not, then, a *bona fide* piece of paper, eh?'

'It was not,' said Richard, casting down his eyes.

'Very good,' answered the lawyer, so cheerfully

that you would have thought his client had cleared himself of the least suspicion upon *that* score, at all events. 'Now, where did you get it?'

'My mother sent me a blank cheque, at my request, and I filled it in.'

'That cheque is destroyed, you say—you burned it, of course?'

'No; I tore it up, and threw it out of the window of the carriage.'

'The devil you did!' said Mr Weasel in perturbation. 'That is not the way to destroy cheques. Had your mother an account at the bank on which it was drawn?'

'Of course,' said Richard simply.

'There is nothing "of course," Mr Yorke, in this matter,' answered the lawyer gravely. 'Are you quite sure?'

'Quite. She has always had an account there; though to no such amount as two thousand pounds.'

'It is a large sum,' muttered the lawyer thoughtfully, 'but still they have not lost one penny of it. In case things went against you, Mr Yorke, would an appeal to the prosecutor be likely to be of service?'

'Certainly not,' answered Richard hastily. 'I would not accept mercy at his hands; besides, it is not a question of mercy.'

'It may come to that,' observed the other gravely. 'We must not deceive ourselves, Mr Yorke.'

'Good heavens! do you believe, then, that I took this money with intent to steal it?'

'What my belief is, is of no consequence, one way or the other; but my opinion is that the jury will take that view, if they hear your story as you tell it. The fact is, you have left out the most important incident of all: the whole case will hinge upon the young lady's having given you these notes with her own hand. It is evident, of course, that she sympathised with you in your scheme,' pursued the lawyer rapidly, and holding up his finger to forbid the protest that was already rising to Richard's lip: 'nothing could be more natural, though most imprudent and ill judged, than her behaviour. She had no more idea of stealing the money than you had; how should she, since it was in a manner her own, she being her father's sole heiress. You and I see that clearly enough, but to a jury used to mere matters of fact, motive has little significance unless put into action. What we want, and what we must have, is evidence that you got these notes not only for, this girl's sake, but from her fingers. Nobody can hurt *her*, you know. Trevethick could never prosecute his own daughter; indeed, the whole affair dwindles down to a lover's stratagem, and there is no need for prosecuting anybody—if we can only put Harry Trevethick into the witness-box. Now, can we, Mr Yorke, or can we not? that's the question.'

Richard was silent; the lawyer's argument struck him with its full force. He had no scruples on the matter for his own part, but he feared that Harry might entertain them—they would be only too much in keeping with her credulous and superstitious nature.

'If I could talk to her alone for five minutes,' muttered Richard uneasily.

'That is impossible,' said Mr Weasel with decision. 'We can only play with such cards as we hold. I could go to Gethin myself, though it would be most inconvenient at this busy time, and

refresh this young woman's memory; but it is a delicate task, and would be looked upon by the other side with some suspicion. Now, is there no judicious friend that can be thoroughly depended upon—a female friend, if possible, since the affair may require tact and sympathy—to effect this little negotiation? Think, my good sir, think.

'Why, there is my mother herself!' ejaculated Richard suddenly. 'She is the wisest of women, and the very one to conduct this matter, if properly instructed.'

'Is she, now, is she?' said the lawyer cheerily. 'Come, come, that's well, and I begin to see a little light. Let her go down to Gethin, where, as I conclude, she is not known, and see Miss Trevethick herself. I should like to see her beforehand, however; indeed, that is absolutely necessary.'

'In my note to her, yesterday, I asked her to call at your office in Plymouth on her way hither,' stammered Richard. 'I thought it better—that is, in the first instance—that she should hear from you how matters stood.'

Mr Weasel took a copious pinch of snuff, and shut his eyes, as though he were going to sneeze; whenever a client got upon an embarrassing topic, Mr Weasel took snuff, to obviate the necessity of looking him in the face; while in case of any compromising disclosure, Mr Weasel sneezed, to obviate hearing it.

'In a case of this kind, Mr Yorke, not a moment is to be lost. I should advise your mother going direct to Gethin from my house, and making sure of this young lady's evidence. There is even a possibility—I don't say it is probable, but there is just a chance, you see—that she may be subpoenaed by the other side.'

'Just so,' assented Richard so naively, that a smile flitted across the little lawyer's face.

'Under these circumstances, then, this is what we will do, my dear young sir: Mrs Yorke will go to the *Gethin Castle* as a guest; and, as I shall venture to suggest, under another name; she will then find an opportunity of speaking to Miss Trevethick without awakening her father's suspicions; and when she comes to Cross Key, she will have, I trust, some good news to bring you, something to talk about (although you must be very careful and guarded, mind that, for you will not be left alone together, as we are) besides mere regrets and lamentations; don't you see, don't you see?'

Richard saw exceedingly well, and felt more grateful to the lawyer for devising such an arrangement than he would like to have confessed; nevertheless, he did thank him heartily.

'Not at all, not at all, my dear young sir,' drawing on one of his gloves, in signal of departure. 'In a case like this, we must consult feelings as well as array our facts; we must bring heart and head to bear together. Speaking of head, reminds me, by-the-bye, of the subject of counsel. I propose to instruct Mr Smoothbore, who leads upon this circuit; I gather from your letter that there will be no difficulty with respect to funds.'

'Whatever may be necessary, Mr Weasel, for my defence, will be, you may rest assured, forthcoming. My mother—'

The smile disappeared from the lawyer's face with electrical rapidity. 'Pardon me, my young friend,' said he; 'but as a professional man, I only deal with principals in these matters. The

word forthcoming is a little vague. Counsel are paid beforehand, you must remember.'

We must not be angry with Mr Weasel, who was really a good sort of man after his kind. He was naturally cautious, and if he had been the most trustful of mankind, his experience would have taught him prudence. He did like to see his money down; and really, as to Mr Yorke, all he knew of his pecuniary position was with relation to that blank cheque, the history of which was not of a nature to inspire confidence.

'I was about to observe,' said Richard haughtily, 'that my mother would satisfy all claims; but, in the meantime, there were over a hundred pounds in notes and gold, which were found upon me when I was searched at Plymouth. If you doubt me, you have only to make inquiries.'

'My dear young sir,' returned the lawyer earnestly, 'this is not courteous, this is not kind. I never doubted you, from the first moment that I saw you; no one with any knowledge of mankind could do so. Professional etiquette compelled me to remark that I could treat with principals only—that is all.—Let me see,' added he, consulting his note-book, 'have I anything more to say? Yes, yes. With respect to this young lady, Miss Harry Trevethick—I did not like to interrupt you at the time, but I see I have made a memorandum—is she pretty?'

'She is very, very beautiful,' said Richard earnestly; the remembrance of her beauty giving a tenderness to his tone.

'That's capital!' nodded the lawyer. 'Old Bantam is our judge this session, and he likes a pretty face. So do we all, for the matter of that, I hope. You are young and good-looking yourself, too; Smoothbore will make something of that, you may depend upon it. "Gracious heavens, is the iron arm of the Law to smother these happy lovers for a mere indiscretion, and make their bright young lives a blank for ever!" He'll give them something like that, sir, in a voice broken by emotion, and bring you off with flying colours.'

'I don't care about the colours, if he only brings me off,' said Richard grimly.

'A very natural remark, my dear young sir, for one in your present situation; but three weeks hence, as I both hope and believe, you will not be so easily satisfied; the more we have, the more we want, you know—except in the matter of time. I have very little to spare of it just now, and must therefore take my leave.'

Mr Weasel had put on his other glove and his hat, and with a cheerful nod, had actually placed his fingers on the door-handle, when he suddenly turned round, and said: 'By-the-bye, I had almost forgotten a little form of words, which in your case, I am sure, will be *but* a form, and yet I do not like to omit it. I never leave a client in your position without asking him the question, so you must excuse me, my young friend, and not be offended.'

'I am not in a position to be very sensitive about what is said to me,' answered Richard bitterly. 'Pray, ask whatever you please.'

Mr Weasel looked cautiously round, to see that the warder was not too near, and lowered his voice to a whisper. 'Is this little affair your first, my dear young sir? I mean,' added he, 'have you ever been in trouble with the law before?'

'Certainly not,' replied Richard, smiling.



'I had anticipated your answer,' said the little lawyer gaily; 'but I thought it right to make quite certain. Because, if the affair should happen to reach a stage where the question of "character" is mooted (though it won't get so far as *that*, I trust, in our case), one doesn't like to be taken altogether by surprise, do you see? You have been a landscape-painter, you say. A most innocent and charming occupation, I am sure, and one which Smoothbore will make the very most of. The case altogether will afford him such opportunities that he really ought to do it cheap. And you've never been anything else, have you? never had any other calling, or obtained your livelihood by any other than quite legal and permissible means—eh? What, what? You have not been quite frank and candid with me, my dear sir, I fear.'

'It is really not of much consequence,' said Richard, hesitating.

'You must allow me to be the judge of that, Mr Yorke,' said the other gravely, taking off his hat once more and one of his gloves. 'Imagine yourself a good Catholic, if you please, with Father Weasel for your priest.'

The confession lasted for some minutes.

'I think you will admit that what I have told you has not much bearing upon the matter in hand,' said Richard, when he had finished.

'None at all, none at all—that is, I hope not,' answered the other thoughtfully. 'But what an interesting revelation it is! What a nice point as to whether the matter is an offence against the law or not! How prettily Smoothbore would treat the subject, if it chanced to come in his way.' He looked at Richard with admiration. 'You're a most remarkable young man, sir; I wish that circumstances permitted of my shaking you by the hand. Good-morning, my dear sir. You may depend upon my not permitting the grass to grow under my feet. When your mother comes, she will have good news for you. Good-morning.'

The warder took possession of Richard, while Mr Weasel, followed by the young man's longing eyes, was ushered to the opposite door, on the other side of which was liberty. But the lawyer's mind was still within the prison walls, though his legs were free, and walking up the street of the little town towards his inn.

'Now, that is really a most remarkable young man,' he murmured to himself. 'A most ingenious young fellow, upon my word. The idea of his having invented a new crime! Why, bless my heart, it's quite an epoch—quite an epoch!'

#### CHAPTER XXVIII.—THE IRON CAGE.

So long as Richard had had Mr Weasel to bear him company, half his troubles, so elastic was his nature, and so apt for social intercourse, seemed to have been removed; but now that that brisk confident voice was heard no more, and the stone passages only echoed to the tread of the warder and himself, his spirits sank even lower than they had been before. Alone in his comfortless cell, he went over the lawyer's talk anew, and it was strange how the sparks of comfort died out of it. It was clear that in the first instance his companion had taken a gloomy view of his case, that he looked upon Richard's own story with utter disbelief, and was convinced it would not hold water before a jury. His remark about the money having been

recovered, must have had reference to a possible mitigation of the sentence, and therefore took conviction for granted. Nor, upon reconsideration of the case with calmness—the calm of loneliness and despair—was, Richard himself admitted, any other conclusion to be arrived at by a stranger. Those who were acquainted with his rash and impulsive character, and reckless ways, would understand that he had no serious intention of robbing Trevethick—except, that is, of his daughter; even Trevethick himself must be aware of that; though, with that same exception before his eyes, it was more than doubtful whether he would acknowledge it. Smarting with the sense of the deceit that Richard had practised (almost with success) upon him, he might conceal his real impression of the affair, and treat it as a common felony. Taking the brutality of Solomon's manner to him when he was arrested, as an index of his prosecutor's purpose, he felt that this was what would happen; and if so, what chance would he have against such evidence? Would the judge and jury be persuaded to believe that he had acted with the romantic folly that had in reality possessed him? And if not, to what protracted wretchedness might he not be doomed!

His old hopes, in short, lay dead within him, and he felt that his late adviser had been right in suggesting the evidence of Harry Trevethick as the only means to secure his acquittal. He did not look beyond *that* for an hour. Life for the next three weeks would have but one event for him—his trial, and its result. The little attorney, whom he had seen but once, the suasive barrister, of whom he had only heard, were from henceforth the two persons upon earth who had the most interest for him of all mankind. If *they* failed him, all was lost. If they succeeded, all, or what had now become his all, was gained. He thought of Harry only as the being upon whose testimony his fate depended; he did not picture her to himself in any other character, though perhaps he would have refused to part with her even at the price of that liberty which had become so precious in his eyes. She would surely not refuse to say the half-dozen words which were the 'open sesame' that alone could set him free! He thought of his mother, not so much as such—the truest and most unselfish friend he had—as the person best qualified to win Harry over to speak those words. He was no longer ashamed to see her; his heart was so full of anxious fear, that there was no room for shame; but he was glad that the lawyer had recommended her to visit Gethin before coming to Cross Key. What he thirsted for was hope, a gleam of sunshine, a whisper of good news. If his mother had not that to give him, let her stay away. He did not wish his heart to be melted within him by regrets and tears: if there was no hope, let it harden on, till it was as hard as adamant, for the hour that, however long delayed, must come at last—of vengeance! He thought of Solomon Coe as one of a dominant race thinks of the slave who has become his master, and was his murderer in his heart ten times a day. He thought of him as the man who would marry Trevethick's daughter, his own Harry, while he (Richard) rotted in jail.

Such were the bitter reflections, creeping fears, and meagre hopes which consumed him when he was alone, that is to say for five-sixths of the day and all the weary night. In the society of Balfour,

he found, if not solace, at least some respite from his gnawing cares. The importance which this man had attached to the recovery of stolen goods as mitigating the punishment of crime, and to good looks in the case of a female witness, or prisoner, corroborated as it had been by the judicial experience of Mr Weasel, gave him confidence in the convict's intelligence; or at least in his judgment with respect to the matter on which Richard's thoughts were solely concentrated. He was never weary of asking this man's opinion on this point and on that of his own case, the details of which he fully confided to him. Balfour, on his part, gave him his best advice, and whatever comfort he could. He did not resent, nor even seem to be aware of the fact, that the position in which he stood himself awoke no corresponding sympathy in Richard. He had taken a fancy to this young fellow, so different from any companion that he had ever known; was flattered by his confidence; and felt that enthusiasm towards him which friendship, when it exists between two persons of widely different grades, sometimes begets in the inferior.

A week passed on, and then, at the same time and place as before, Richard was summoned from his fellow-prisoners: he turned pale in spite of himself, as he rose from the table to meet for the first time, since disgrace had overwhelmed him, his mother's face.

'Don't give way, my young master,' whispered Balfour good-naturedly, 'for that will only make the old woman fret.'

Richard nodded, and followed the warder, who on this occasion led the way through a different door. 'It ain't Mr Weasel this time,' said the latter, in answer to his look of surprise: 'it's a private friend, and therefore we can't let you have the glass box.' He ushered him into what would have been a stone court-yard, except that it had a roof also of stone: in the middle of this, running right across it, was a sort of cage of iron, or rather a passage some six feet broad, shut in on either side by high iron rails; within this paced an officer of the prison; and on the other side of it stood a female figure, whom Richard at once recognised as his mother. It was with this iron cage between them, and in the presence of an official, that prisoners in Cross Key Jail were alone permitted to receive the visits of their friends and kinsfolk. It was no wonder that, in an interview under such restrictions, Mr Weasel should have recommended caution.

To do Richard justice, however, that was not the reflection that now passed through his mind. For all his selfish thoughts and calculations, he had really yearned to cast himself on his mother's breast, and feel once more her loving arms around him; to whisper in her ever-ready ear his sorrow for the past, his anxieties for the future; and when he saw that this was not to be, the heart that he would have poured out before her seemed to sink and shrink within him. In this material obstacle between them he seemed to behold a type of the dread doom that was impending over him—separation from humanity, exclusion from the world without, a life-long entombment within stone walls. He put his hand and arm through the bars, mechanically, to touch his mother's fingers, and when he found he could not reach them, he burst into tears. It was only by a great effort that Mrs Yorke could maintain her self-control; but she

nevertheless did do so. Her face was calm, and her eyes, though full of tenderness and pity, were tearless; only her low soft voice gave token of the woe within her in its tremulous and faltering tones.

'Dear Richard,' it said, 'my own dear Richard, take heart; a few days hence, and you will be folded in your mother's arms; not to stray from them again, I trust, my boy, my boy!' She pressed her forehead with its fine white hair against the cruel bars, and seemed to devour him with her loving eyes. 'All will yet be well,' she continued; 'your innocence cannot fail to be established, and this dreadful time will be forgotten like an evil dream.'

'Have you been to Gethin, mother?'

'Yes, dear; I only came from thence this morning. Harry sent you her best love. Your faith in her, she bade me tell you, is not misplaced; *she will be in the witness-box, for certain.*' This last sentence was uttered in the French tongue, and very rapidly.

'I am very sorry, ma'am,' interrupted the official, who had retired to the farther extremity of the cage, 'but my orders are to prohibit conversation between prisoners and their friends in a foreign language.'

'I will take care not to transgress again,' said Mrs Yorke with a sweet smile; 'your consideration for us I am sure demands all obedience.'

'Has Mr Weasel made his arrangements, mother?'

'Yes, all: the subpoena will be sent to Gethin to-morrow. He is most confident as to the result.'

'And what does Mr Smoothbore say? Have you seen him?'

'No, dear; no. But the matter on which I went to Gethin having been satisfactorily arranged, we may consider that is all settled. Your counsel has no doubt of being able to establish your innocence, notwithstanding the malice of your enemies.'

'But what is he like, this Smoothbore?'

'Well, the fact is, Richard, we have not got him, but another man, a Mr Balais—quite his equal, Mr Weasel assures me, in all respects.'

'Not got him!' cried Richard impatiently. 'Why, Weasel told me Smoothbore led the circuit. Why have we not secured him?'

'He has been retained by the other side,' answered Mrs Yorke, in a tone that she in vain endeavoured to render cheerful. 'To say the truth, Richard, the prosecutor is exhibiting the utmost vindictiveness, and straining every nerve for a conviction. Money, which he was said to be so fond of, is now no object with him, or at least he spares none. But he cannot bribe twelve honest men, nor a righteous judge.'

'I knew it,' exclaimed Richard, stamping his foot on the stone floor: 'those sullen brutes, Trevethick and the other, would have my life, if they could: there is nothing that they would stick at, be assured of that—and do you put Weasel on his guard—to work my ruin. How could he be such a dolt as to let them be beforehand with him, when he himself said there was not an hour to be lost!'

'Indeed, Richard, all was done for the best. One could scarcely expect Mr Weasel to advance so large a sum as was required, without security; and he did communicate with Mr Smoothbore as soon as he had satisfied himself upon that score. He assures me Mr Balais is quite as clever a counsel.

Indeed, I should not have told you of the change, had you not pressed the question so directly.'

'Tell me all, mother; tell me everything; I adjure you to keep nothing back. To think, and guess, and fear, in a place like this, is worse than not to know the worst. Trevethick is a miser, and yet you say he is spending with a lavish hand. How is it you know that?'

'Why, Mr Smoothbore's clerk is a friend of Mr Weasel's, and he hears from him that his master had never received so large a retaining fee as on this occasion. The sum we offered, two days afterwards, though larger than is customary, was, he said, but a trifle compared with it.'

'You have something else to tell me yet, mother—I see it in your eyes. If you go away with it untold, you leave me on the rack.'

'There is nothing more,' answered his mother, hesitatingly, 'or almost nothing.'

'What is it?' cried Richard hoarsely—'what is it?'

'Well, merely this: that thinking that no money should be spared to help you in this dreadful trouble, Richard, and having but a very little of my own, I—I forgot my pride and steadfast resolution never to ask your father'—

'You did not apply to Carew for money, surely?' ejaculated Richard angrily. 'To let him know that I was here was ruin.'

'It may have been ill judged indeed, dear Richard,' replied his mother quietly, 'but it was not ill meant. Do you suppose it cost me nothing to be his suppliant? Do you suppose I have no scorn nor hate, as you have, for those who have wronged me and you? If fury could avail to set you free, your mother would be as the tigress robbed of her young: it is an easy thing enough to fume and foam; it is hard to have to clasp the knees of those whom you despise, in vain.'

'He refused you, then, this man?'

'He did, Richard. He told me—what I had not learned from you; I do not say it to reproach you, dear—what it was that had so long detained you at Gethin: he mentioned in coarsest terms your love for Harry, and how you had misrepresented yourself to Trevethick as the heir of Crompton, in order to win her. He expressed a callous indifference to your present peril, and added something more in menace than in warning respecting that affair with Chandos which caused you to leave his roof. Since it seemed you had made no secret of the matter to Mr Weasel, I shewed him Carew's note; and his opinion is that Trevethick has spies at work to track your past. This may or may not injure you. Mr Weasel thinks that it will not; but it shews the rancour with which this case is pressed by Trevethick—a malice which we are altogether at a loss to understand.'

Richard ground his heel upon the stone without reply; while his mother looked at him in gravest sorrow.

'Your time is almost up, ma'am,' said the warder; 'there's only a minute more.'

'You told her how much depended on her, mother, did you?' said Richard, rousing himself in the effort.

'Yes, dear. She will not fail us, never fear. Keep heart and hope; and as for me, you will be sure that not a moment of my waking thoughts is wasted upon aught but you. I shall see you again, once more at least, before you—before the

trial comes on—and Mr Weasel will be here next week again. Is there anything, my own dear boy, that I can do for you?'

'One moment, mother. Carew has not punished you, on my account, I trust? He has not cut off'—

'The annuity? Yes; he has stopped that.'

'May he rot on earth, and perish everlastingly!'

'Hush, hush, dear; pray, be calm; there is no need to fret. I can support myself without his aid, indeed I can; and perhaps he may relent when he gets sane, for he was like a madman at my coming to Crompton. Mr Whympy will do all he can, I am sure. How cruel it was of me to heed your words, and tell you— Look to him, warder, look to my son!' she screamed.

Richard had indeed turned deadly pale, and though his fingers still mechanically clutched the iron rail, was swaying to and fro; the warder unlocked the passage-gate and ran to him just in time to save his falling headlong on the pavement.

'Are you a man,' said the agonised woman, 'or iron like this?'—and she beat against the railing passionately—'that you will not let a mother kiss her son when he is dying?'

'Nay, nay, ma'am; it's not so bad as that,' said the warder good-naturedly: 'see, he's a-coming round agen all right. I've seen a many took like that. In half a minute he'll be himself again. It's his trouble as does it, bless you. If you'll take my advice, you'll spare both your son and yourself the pain of parting, and leave him as he is. I'd go bail for it, it's just a faint, that's all.'

'Let me kiss him once,' implored the unhappy woman. 'Oh, man, if you have ever known a mother's love, let me kiss him once! Here is a five pound note—take it, and leave me still your debtor—but one kiss.'

'Nay, ma'am, I can't take your money; of which, as I couldn't help hearing you say, you have not got too much to spare. But you shall kiss your bonnie boy, and welcome;' and with that the stout warder took the unconscious lad up in his arms, and bore him within the passage; and his mother put her lips between the bars and pressed them to his forehead, once, twice, thrice.

'There, there, ma'am; that will do,' muttered the man impatiently; 'and even that is as much as my place is worth.—Now, just tap at yonder door, and they'll let you out.'

Mrs Yorke obeyed him without a word. She had heard the heavy fluttering sigh that betokened Richard's return to consciousness, and knew that the worst was over; unless, indeed, the coming back to life might not be the worst of all.

#### NOTICE TO MARINERS.

AMONG the numberless announcements that are made public here, there, and everywhere, but more particularly in the advertising columns of the newspapers, may be frequently found the Notice to Mariners. The sight of this heading, however, is usually enough for the general reader, and it is passed by as 'one of those things no fellow can understand.' There is something, too, in the very words 'notice to mariners' which seems to have an antiquated smack about it, making it appear somewhat out of place in these days. We feel half-inclined to associate the term mariners with bygone days, when gray-bearded old men of the sea voyaged



across an unknown expanse of ocean in search of anything they could find.

We have a few words to say about these nautical announcements, because we are deeply impressed with their importance and the truly valuable service they render in the world. Their object is to assist the sailor in the safe navigation of the trackless deep, and to point out some of the innumerable dangers which beset his course; thus aiding international commerce, and encouraging that free intercourse between man and man all over the world, which does so much to promote universal good-feeling and friendship, and to disseminate the arts of civilisation in the remotest corners of the globe.

A most remarkable feature in the notices to mariners is their universality: their circulation knows no local bounds, and the published information has reference to all the oceans, seas, and great rivers which are known on the earth. They appear in all kinds of languages—not always, perhaps, under the heading of notice to mariners, but in effect the same—and the information is transmitted far and wide for the benefit of the whole maritime world. We boast of our gigantic system of advertising in these days, but the efforts of our most enterprising puffers sink into puny insignificance when compared with the world-wide celebrity attained by these notices. It is really very gratifying to reflect on this extensive mutual interchange of useful intelligence. Without any binding treaties or formal enactments, here is a humane system of international reciprocity in full work, of which many of us are altogether ignorant, and for which we would scarcely have given the world credit.

Our own country has no cause for self-reproach as regards the position she occupies with reference to these publications. Our shores, as every one knows, are most difficult to approach: there are sandbanks, treacherous rocks, awkward bars at the entrances of our harbours, and a host of other unpleasant obstacles in the way of safe navigation about our coasts. But to all the world we open our arms, and publish minute directions how we are to be approached in safety; we tell mariners the exact positions of the dangers, and how we have marked them by lights, buoys, or beacons; we instruct them how to find their way by a judicious use of the numerous sea-marks set up by us; and, in fact, we give them all the information which will enable them to reach our ports in safety, as a hospitable and civilised nation should do.

Most of our English notices are dated from the Trinity House of London, the venerable corporation which has the charge of marking the English coast, and which has addressed words of guidance and warning to the maritime community for a very long period. Directions as to the navigation of the dangerous shores of Scotland are published by the Commissioners of Northern Light-houses; and the Commissioners of Irish Lights tell the world all about the coasts of the Emerald Isle. At all the seaports in the kingdom may be seen these familiar announcements posted up where they are likely to be seen by seafaring men; and abroad they may also be found at most of the foreign ports, translated into the languages of the different countries.

Our British notices relate mostly to the light-houses, light-vessels, fog-signals, buoys, and beacons

placed for various purposes on different parts of the coast; their exact positions are indicated, their purposes explained, and all their distinctive features accurately described. But, sad to say, in spite of all these numerous guides and warning marks, by far the greater number of our notices refer to wrecks lying in the track of navigation—the plain matter-of-fact statement generally commencing: 'Notice is hereby given that a green buoy marked with the word "Wreck" has been laid on a vessel sunk,' &c. These announcements are subjects for much painful reflection. It is heart-rending to read in the newspapers an occasional sad story of shipwreck and loss of life; but these frequent and melancholy announcements reveal a much more distressing state of things than we, 'who sit at home at ease,' have any notion of. The following is an extract from a notice issued last year, which tells a very sad tale: 'Information having been received at this House, that owing to the hurricane of Friday evening last, three vessels, with masts shewing out of water, have been sunk between the Elbow Buoy and the shore; one small vessel on the Quern close to the buoy; one vessel inside the South Brake Buoy, another to the southward of it, and two vessels in the Gull Stream; and that fears are entertained that more have foundered, the masts of which are not visible: Mariners are hereby warned to use extreme caution in navigating these channels. Wreck-buoys will be placed to mark the sunken vessels as promptly as possible, and such other measures taken as may be expedient for the safety of navigation.'

Occasionally, a cautionary notice is addressed to mariners respecting misleading lights. We can hardly think that the spirit of the wreckers of olden days exists among us now, but it is nevertheless true that in certain neighbourhoods vessels have been deceived by false lights, and lured to destruction. We are glad to think, however, that the issue of such notices is very rare.

The information received by the Admiralty, and published for the benefit of our nautical community, is somewhat more varied than our own published intelligence. Besides particulars concerning the lighting and marking of foreign coasts, much interesting and valuable information is given respecting the general character of the open sea. Shoals in mid-ocean formed by coral reefs, sandbanks, or sunken rocks, are made known, and their positions pointed out as near as careful observations enable them to be stated. The existence of certain currents in different parts is notified, and their direction and force indicated, so that masters of vessels may make due allowance for their power when they happen to be in the neighbourhood. Then, again, sailors are informed when certain seas are rendered unnavigable by reason of their being blocked up with ice, and the meaning of signals shewn in the vicinity of these temporarily frozen seas is explained; such, for example, as the following: 'The Russian government has given notice, that during the time there is compact ice in the Gulf of Riga, the following signals will be made from the Lyser Ort light-house. By day—A black ball will be hoisted on the flagstaff on the gallery. By night—In place of the fixed white light, a red light will be exhibited.'

Many of the ports in the Baltic are at certain seasons of the year much more effectually blockaded in this natural manner than the artificial blockade

occasionally established in times of war. It is well known how dangerous it is for vessels to be near floating icebergs. Towering and glittering masses, often several hundred feet high, detach themselves from the huge ice-fields in the Arctic regions, and go out cruising on their own account. And as they come into warmer water, the lower part gradually melts, and in time a very little is sufficient to upset their equilibrium, and they capsize with a terrific crash. Fancy St Paul's Cathedral sailing about in the open sea, and suddenly turning topsy-turvy; the commotion created would be certainly extraordinary, and by no means pleasant to any vessel that might be near. Some icebergs are quite as large as St Paul's. Among the notices to mariners may occasionally be found warnings concerning these icebergs. One dated January in this year calls attention to 'exceptionally large quantities of ice now adrift in the South Atlantic; . . . large numbers of icebergs and detached masses of ice having been fallen in with in the months of September and November 1869, by vessels homeward bound round Cape Horn.'

Many other particulars respecting foreign parts are published for the information of mariners: the peculiarities of the various coasts, the depths of water at the entrances of the different ports, the prevailing winds, the liability to fogs, waterspouts, and a host of other natural phenomena which are locally peculiar, are made known; and by the aid of this knowledge our ships are enabled to penetrate into the midst of the numerous islands of Polynesia, and to navigate safely the waters of the Eastern Archipelago.

In looking over some of the announcements concerning foreign parts, one cannot help being struck with the very extraordinary names of places that are to be met with. It can easily be imagined that, when nearly every foreign country contributes, it is highly probable some places will be mentioned which are neither familiar to our ears nor utterable by our tongues. What could poor Jack do with such a combination of letters as Biezelingscheham? (which we would observe, for our reader's information, means a place in Belgium); and we can fancy what a fearful spluttering he would make over Ooltgensplaat, another musical name, according to the Dutch fancy. But a remarkable and somewhat characteristic instance of peculiar nomenclature appeared some little time ago in an American notice: a light-vessel was described as being placed 'half a mile south of the Young and Old Cock,' in order to mark 'the Hen and Chickens Reef off Gooseberry Point at the entrance to Buzzards Bay, Massachusetts.' We might almost fancy that even in these notices the characteristics of certain nations peeped out.

A considerable difference is to be observed between the phraseology of our notices of the present day and those of earlier times. In one old notice, mariners are warned of a strong ebb-tide near the Spurn Point in Yorkshire, and are almost entreated 'to make full allowance for its effects, lest they be carried by it upon that dangerous bank, which has been the fatal cause of most of the losses that have lately occurred, through want of due attention to this most material circumstance;' in another it is stated that certain beacons are placed 'in the hope of preventing a recurrence of the melancholy and serious losses which have frequently been occasioned by vessels striking on

these dangerous rocks.' The tone is different in these more matter-of-fact days; bare facts only are now published; in the busy life of to-day, we have too much to think of to have room for public expression of feeling; so the modern literature of the notices to mariners is matter of fact and to the purpose, without any sentimental flourishes, such as those in which our great-grandfathers seem to have delighted. But we hope that the kindly spirit which was characteristic of the old times, and which prompted the touching allusions in those old publications, still animates us English people in these days, although it may not find public expression.

A few more words as we call attention to two notices of recent issue, which are very worthy of remark. The one has reference to the Suez Canal: it is very lengthy, giving much detailed information how to approach Port Said, and where is the best anchorage. It describes the principal features of the canal from one point to another; gives warning where sand-drifts are likely to be met with, and, in fact, gives full instructions for the safe navigation of the whole eighty-six miles and a half.

The other concerns a telegraphic station vessel, to be moored in the middle of the western entrance to the English Channel, for the purpose of enabling vessels to receive orders without calling at any port, and to be of general service to passing ships. The vessel is to be moored in fifty-five to fifty-nine fathoms water, and will be connected with the English coast by a telegraphic cable, which will require to be more than fifty miles long.

Here are two remarkable announcements. One tells of the successful completion of a most difficult undertaking, which, before it was commenced, was characterised by many as a wild and romantic scheme; and the other describes literally 'a home on the rolling deep,' to be moored in deep water, in the very chops of the Channel. This is information indeed for mariners! We can nevertheless believe that the amphibious old beings who loiter about at all sea-side places would shake their ancient old heads, and prophesy that no good could come of all these innovations. But the true mariner of these days is a very different man to the 'old salt': science and discovery, not ignorance and superstition, now influence navigation and our navigators.

#### EVENING.

SWEET sounds, so variable in tone at eve,  
Swell through the liquid air from fold and field,  
And what, a moment gone, I could believe  
Were children's shouts, to woodland echoes yield.  
The sun's last rays die on the gleaming pane—  
A glorious death; and all the rosy air  
Is deadened to a marble hue again,  
With veins and arteries shewing blue and bare.  
Anon soft shades of twilight steal around,  
Usurping all the spheres of lingering day;  
And sense of sight and motion of sweet sound  
Fail, as the night pursues its wonted way;  
While memory, which no darkness can efface,  
Slips in between, and thus supplies their place.

Printed and Published by W. & R. CHAMBERS, 47 Paternoster Row, LONDON, and 339 High Street, EDINBURGH. Also sold by all Booksellers.